



The Grebe

Volume 8, Issue 3

Summer 2012

Mission of The Friends of
Deer Flat:

The purpose of this group is to promote, protect, and provide resources to preserve and enhance Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Inside this issue:

Meet Solo, the new Osprey Chick	1
A Note from the President	2
Upcoming Events	3
Signs of Summer	4
Meet Solo...(continued)	4
CCP Update	5
2012 Duck Stamp	5
The One that Didn't Get Away	6
Fish Springs NWR	7,8
Membership Information	9
Summer Birds at Deer Flat	10

A NAME FOR THE OSPREY CHICK

The osprey pair near the refuge visitor center is happy to announce the arrival of their one and only chick this season. Its name is "Solo." It arrived several days late but is growing rapidly. With only one chick to feed, Mom and Pop osprey have a bit more time to loaf around the nest and watch over Solo.

Thanks to all those who submitted names for the young osprey: Lonesome Larry, Only, Lonely Lowell, Lovely Flyer, etc. And a thank you also to those who took time to vote. All of the names received a vote or two, but "Solo" was by far the favorite choice. Of course, you may call him/her anything you would like. Just be sure to tune into the webcam once in awhile and watch the chick's early life unfold. All too soon it will fledge and have to learn that life isn't necessarily fair and that the daily repast sometimes comes hard to get.

<http://www2.fiberpipe.net/deerflat/ospreycam.asp>

Solo with parent Osprey



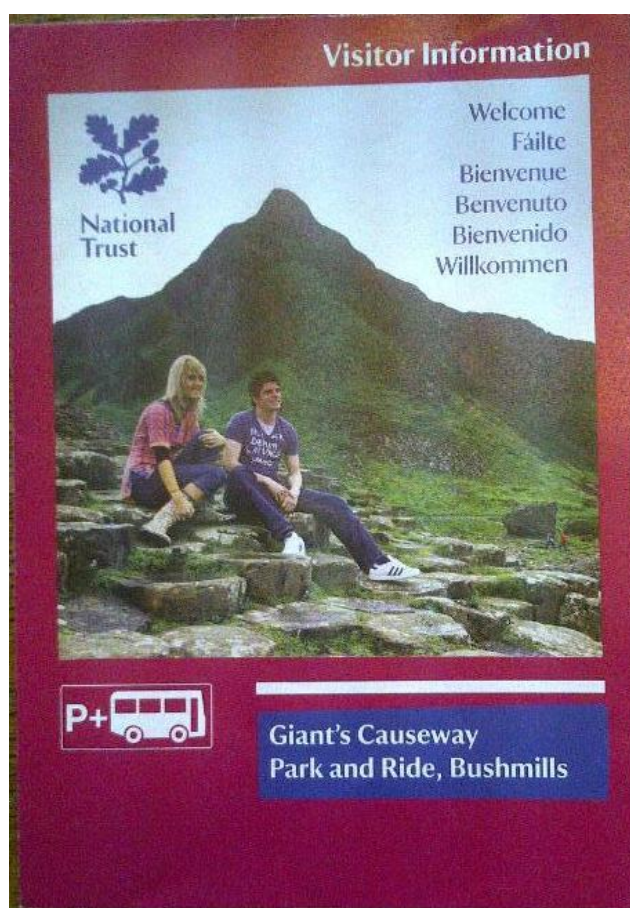
A Note from the President:

We're not alone...

During June I had the opportunity to travel in Ireland with my younger daughter. We drove through many beautiful areas and took a tour bus north to the Giant's Causeway. As we rode I overheard a woman talking to a gentleman about their initiative to get kids back to nature and out of doors. I immediately thought of the local "Be Outside, Idaho" partnership that encouraged children and families to spend time in nature, so as we were exiting the area and returning to the bus I was able to ask for a copy of their booklet. I felt sad that throughout the globe we are having to re-introduce kids to the simple joy of exploration and playing in the outdoors, but encouraged that so many of us feel it is important.

My second thought was about the terminology Ireland has chosen for the organization that oversees many of these wonderful outdoor sites. They are part of the National Trust. What a wonderful concept that is...TRUST. That we the citizens are trusting you to take care of these special places. Wouldn't it be nice if our local citizens "trusted" us to take care of the land, Trusted us to make the right decisions, trusted us to make sure this refuge lasted for our children and grandchildren to see and enjoy.

As we await the release of the CCP I thank all of you who volunteered your time and talents to Bio Blitz and I encourage you to join in as we gear up for our next opportunity to celebrate this special place in October during National Wildlife Refuge Week. We need your talents to help organize events and opportunities for our local families to come to the refuge to see its beauty and experience the renewal of time spent in nature.



Mark your calendar...

Upcoming Events

Reading at the Refuge

1st & 3rd Mondays of the month.

Time: 10 a.m. or 2 p.m.

Preschoolers (and their parents!) are invited to Reading at the Refuge. Children listen to a wildlife-related story and participate in related activities that will help them learn about the environment.

Programs are held at the refuge Visitors Center.

Desert Detectives Day Camp

Explore how plants and animals survive life in the desert through activities, nature walks, crafts & games. This is a camp for kids going into 2nd and 3rd grade. The camp will be held **July 9th-13th from 9-12:30pm**. Registration is required and space is limited. Please contact Kyle Luthman at 467-9278 or kyle_luthman@fws.gov to register.

The Day Camp may be full. Contact Kyle if you are interested in the day camp.

Upcoming Refuge Events:

For more information on all events, contact the refuge at 467-9278 or deerflat@fws.gov

The **Grebe** newsletter is published quarterly. If you have an article or photo that you would like to be included in a future newsletter, please contact Denise Hughes at den.hug100@gmail.com

Signs of Summer at Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge



Solo with its Parents

(continued from page 1)



Deer Flat NWR - CCP Update

The Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan is currently being reviewed, edited, and formatted. Fish and Wildlife Service staffs at the Regional and Washington DC Office levels are currently learning about the details of the plan so they can respond to questions from the public and provide feedback prior to the plan's release. After approval to release the document is received, it will take the Refuge staff about a month to make final edits, format changes and to have the document printed. **No matter when the Draft document is released, the Refuge is still committed to providing a 60-day public comment period.** Once we have a more definite release date, we will provide that information to the public.

Jennifer Brown-Scott
Refuge Manager

2012 Duck Stamp is now on Sale!



The story of the stamp is a great one. Since 1934, the sales of Federal Duck Stamps have generated more than \$750 million, which has been used to purchase or lease over 5.3 million acres of waterfowl/wetland habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System (www.fws.gov/refuges/). Ninety-eight cents of every dollar of the \$15 cost goes to land protection.

June 29 is the first day of sale for the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, also known as the "Duck Stamp". The stamp covers your entrance fee in to any National Wildlife Refuge that charges one, for the entire stamp year running from July 1, 2012 to June 30, 2013. You can purchase a stamp at a refuge fee station or office, most post offices, from refuge Friends groups and over the web.

The One That Didn't Get Away!



A few weeks ago, I had an opportunity to watch a Great Blue Heron catch a yellow perch at the Lower Dam. The heron took almost 15 minutes preparing the fish before it ate the perch. It walked to the top of the berm and threw the fish to the ground. Then it speared the fish and returned to the water. The heron did this 4 or 5 times. Then it swallowed the fish whole. It was fascinating to watch the drama! When the heron was finished eating, it fluffed its feathers and returned to fishing. The people fishing up the canal didn't see the fish that got past them.....Denise

Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge – Revisited

by Bob Christensen

The mid-afternoon sun beat down on us, a three-some volunteer crew at Fish Springs NWR in the middle of Utah's west desert. The earlier breeze had dissipated allowing the swarms of gnats and biting flies to have their heyday--buzzing around our ears and trying to fly up our nostrils. No matter how much insect spray we applied, they kept up their relentless attacks. I had chosen to keep on my collared long-sleeve shirt and jeans for the warm afternoon's work assignments. Seth and Hannah, my grandkids, had dawned shorts and sleeveless tops. Now they were experiencing the consequences of their cooler dress attire. Welts were breaking out where the gnats had bit the exposed skin. Seth was especially vulnerable—seems they liked his taste best of all. We were replacing faded regulatory signs along the refuge roadways. Some required a chisel and large hammer to bust the rusty bolts loose and replace them with new ones. In his frustration with the biting insects Seth missed his mark and pounded his finger instead of the chisel. That was it! In a fit of aggravation he jumped around howling in frustration, holding his damaged finger close to his body while swatting the unrelenting swarms with the other gloved hand. Meanwhile Hannah was also ready to cash in the rest of the day to escape the heat and the hoards of no-see-ums. But mean old grandpa insisted they endure until their eight hours were completed.



In 1968, I started my career as a summer biological aid at Fish Springs. At that time the refuge was only nine years old. I was involved in banding waterfowl, searching for duck nests, waterfowl counts, vegetation mapping, and lots of medial tasks. Fish Springs was where I learned to love and identify birdlife. It was a life changing experience for me. So, here I was back again to experience the refuge 44 years later. What had changed? The refuge impoundments, roadways and headquarters are much the same. The desert alkaline springs continue to feed the refuge wetlands at about 30cfs. (The refuge manager taught us that this is *fossil* water--originating as precipitation tens of thousands of years ago.) Native fishes (i.e. Utah chub and speckled dace) are still found in the springs and waterways; although the least chub is now absent, replaced with a ubiquitous exotic species, the mosquito fish. Dense growths of common reed (*Phragmites communis*) have greatly expanded throughout the refuge. The refuge now has an electrical landline as well as phone and internet service, and a potable water supply; in yesteryear it had generators, no phone service, and drinking water had to be trucked in from Calleo, a ranching community 30 miles to the west.

Fish Springs is one of the most remote NWRs in the lower 48 states. In my earlier experience I had to travel about 80 miles of unpaved rough roads to reach the refuge along the historic Pony Express route. This year we had only 56 miles of the same. Even so, I busted one of my tires—*déjà vu* from 1968 when I lost four tires traveling back and forth on the weekends during that one summer.



Hannah, Seth, and I worked for three days erecting signs, cleaning up the day use area, and replacing the faded regulatory signs. But the nice thing was that we were able to transverse every corner of the refuge, seeing more of it than what I had the opportunity to observe those many years previous. And yes, we did take time to experience the wildlife. Just on our way along the Historic Pony Express Trail we saw countless horned larks, two young ferruginous hawks, a family of burrowing owls, numerous pronghorns (bucks, does, and fawns) and a herd of 84 wild mustangs. The kids got really excited to see so much wildlife up close.

On the refuge some of my favorite observations were: watching a flock of ruddy ducks frolic in a secluded tule-fringed bay of Shoveler Pool; seeing the convulsive moves of an American bittern as he voiced his “oonk-a-lunk” calls in the dense grass where we first saw him in frozen-posture with his bill turned skyward; a canvasback mother guiding her 8 ducklings through the quiet waters of Pintail Pool; white-tailed antelope squirrels scampering under the clumps of greasewood; close up view of newly hatched American avocet chicks; and the nonchalant attitude of a mangy looking refuge coyote.



Wild Mustangs

You can learn more about Fish Springs NWR by visiting:

<http://www.fws.gov/fishsprings/>.

They are always looking for volunteers. We stayed in their fully equipped bunkhouse along with four summer interns.



American Bittern



American Avocet chick



Mangy Coyote

Become a Member in 2012

Dear Friends, Summer will be upon us before we are ready for it. If you have not renewed your membership or become a member of the Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge (FDFWR), then now's the time to do it. Your tax exempt gift is critical to our ongoing work to preserve and enhance Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge.

In addition to providing financial support, our current members can do so much more for Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge. FDFWR's credibility is greatly enhanced when we can count on YOU as a vital and growing membership from all walks of life.

For your convenience, there is a renewal form below. If you have any questions concerning your membership or about what Friends members do, please call Bob Christensen at 208-454-2518.

Be a Friend! Join Today!

Name

Address

City

State Zip Code

Telephone

Email address (please include email address if you have one – this is our primary means of communicating with Friends members)

Annual Membership Categories:

___ Owl (Senior & Student)	\$10
___ Deer (Individual)	\$15
___ Fox (Family)	\$25
___ Osprey	\$50
___ Eagle	\$100
___ Goldeneye	\$500

All contributions are tax deductible

Please detach this portion and return with a check payable to:

Friends of Deer Flat Wildlife Refuge
13751 Upper Embankment Road
Nampa, Idaho 83686-8046



Canada Geese Roosting on Ice
Friends Webcam Photo



**FRIENDS OF DEER
FLAT WILDLIFE
REFUGE**

Nampa, Idaho 83686-8046

Executive Board:

President - Genevieve

Johannsen (467-7515)

Vice President - Vacant

Secretary - Vacant

Treasurer - Bob

Christensen (454-2518)

***Newsletter - Denise Hughes
(850-5885)***

To preserves and enhance Deer Flat National Wildlife Refuge

The Grebe is published four times a year — look for the next issue in Fall 2012

Summer Birds at the Refuge

Summer Birds at the refuge - Spotted Sandpiper, Cliff Swallows, Red-winged Blackbird, Double-crested Cormorant



**We are on the web at:
[www.fws.gov/deerflat/
friends.htm](http://www.fws.gov/deerflat/friends.htm)**